



Safe at Home

We believe families can keep their children safe with support.
And if they can't...

Caregiving

We believe children and youth should be cared for in a familiar, nurturing, and safe environment.
And while they are in care...

Child's Experience

We believe every child and youth is entitled to thrive through stability, family connections, quality treatment, and a voice in planning.

Parental Support for Reunification

We believe, through partnership and support, parents can grow and change in order to safely parent their children.
And if the children cannot return home...

Forever Connections

We believe all children and youth deserve a sense of belonging and an unconditional commitment in a lifelong family, supported by their communities.

Relationships

We believe in the power of human relationships to heal and grow. The people who serve and support children, youth and families are our greatest resource.

Frequently Asked Questions

These are some questions frequently asked by pregnant or parenting individuals who are considering adoption or other alternatives for their child.

May I see my child?

The decision on whether or not to see your newborn child at the hospital is up to you, as well as the way in which you do so. You may have the baby stay in your room or you may visit with your child at a time convenient for you. If you wish to see your child when they are voluntarily placed in out-of-home (foster) care, the agency can arrange visitation for you while you consider your options.

What happens in the hospital?

A social worker will review your options and if you decide to voluntarily place your child in out-of-home (foster) care, the necessary arrangements will be made. You will sign a form releasing the baby from the hospital, with a hospital employee acting as a witness. The social worker will ask you to sign a temporary agreement granting permission to temporarily take care of your child until you either sign a relinquishment or the child is returned to you.

Can I have contact with my child in the future?

At the time you sign the relinquishment, you also sign a statement that either gives or withholds your permission for the agency to give your child (the adoptee) your name and address when they reach the age of 18. Upon reaching this age, they can write to the agency requesting non-identifying background information about you, but no information that could identify you can be given without your written permission. If you withhold permission and later change your mind, you can submit a Consent for Contact form to our agency at any time.

If you wish to allow future contact, it is your responsibility to keep the agency advised of your current address. You may choose to write a letter to the adoptee or the adoptive family and the agency will forward the letter at the appropriate time. If you supply pictures of yourself, the agency will share them with the child. If you want ongoing written or in-person updates, the agency can attempt to match an adoptive family willing to meet this request.

You are welcome to call 805-654-3444 for information, or request to meet with a social worker to discuss your options and receive detailed answers to your questions.

The County of Ventura Human Services Agency provides public services that offer support, hope and opportunity for improved well-being. Our programs help ensure the protection of children, the elderly, and dependent adults, and provide a safety net for individuals and families who need assistance with basic necessities, such as food, housing and health care. Additionally, we help people secure employment through education, training, job search skills and job placement.



Call 2-1-1 to learn about resources in your community.



COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Services Agency

Call toll-free: 866-904-9362
TTY 800-735-2922 or 711
Monday-Friday | 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

vchsa.org

HSA-028 9/22

Adoption Services



Options for birth parents



COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Services Agency

Adoption Is an Option

The Human Services Agency provides a link between needed services, such as counseling, medical care, and protection of your legal rights if you give your child up for adoption.



Helping You with Options

We are here to help and answer your questions

If you are pregnant or parenting, and are considering placing your child for adoption, you probably have many questions. This guide is intended to provide you with brief information about the adoption process, your rights, and the legal issues and decisions you face.

The Human Services Agency (HSA) Permanency program is dedicated to assisting families considering adoption, like yourself, and will walk along side of you throughout this journey. HSA is committed to providing you with a supportive, safe and nurturing environment that is non-judgmental and inclusive in meeting the specific needs of yourself and your child. You may call 805-654-3444 for information, or request to meet with an adoptions social worker to discuss adoption options and answer your questions in detail.

What Adoption Means

A gift of love

Adoption is a way for you to provide a safe and permanent home for your child with another family. When you decide that adoption is the best choice for your child, you give them the opportunity to grow up in a stable, secure, and loving home with individuals who have made a conscious decision to become parents. When the adoption process is finalized, your child will legally become a member of the adoptive family, and your legal ties with your birth child will be ended.

Adoption Services

Providing you with options, services and supports

The Human Services Agency has adoption social workers available to help you sort out your options. This process will allow you to make an informed decision about the best course of action for yourself and your child. We are also able to make referrals to the appropriate community services and supports that you may need, such as medical care, counseling, financial assistance, continuing education, and other services. Our dedicated staff is here to help.

Birth Father's Rights

Both mothers and fathers are considered

Whether or not you are married to the father of your child, you still have a responsibility to make him aware of the situation. The father has the right to be aware of the plans for their child, but situations vary. Fathers' rights are a complex matter, and you need to discuss your circumstances in depth with your adoption social worker.

Types of Adoptions

Licensed Adoption Agencies and Public Agency Adoptions

In an agency adoption in California, a licensed adoption agency will interview and study the adoptive family before a child is placed with them. The adoption agency does not reveal the identities of the birth

parents or the adoptive parents. The adoptive family (and your child) will not have any information about you unless you choose to give it, and you will not know the identity of the adoptive family.

The Human Services Agency is a public agency and subject to regulations and mandates by the State Department of Social Services. Similar to Agency Adoptions described above, prospective adoptive families must pass an approval process that thoroughly assesses their ability to meet the diverse needs of children. Every effort is made to honor your preferences for the type of adoptive family that will best meet the needs of your child. Your wishes for the type of family your child goes to will be considered, but in an agency adoption and public agency adoption, there is no guarantee that your child will be placed with the family of your choice.

Independent (Private) Adoption

In an independent (private) adoption, you may choose the prospective adoptive parent(s) and place the child directly with them. When making this decision, you must have personal knowledge of certain facts about the prospective adoptive parent(s). You will also receive an advisement of your rights, responsibilities, and options from the agency or attorney handling the private adoption. You will be asked to sign an Independent Adoption Placement Agreement, which in 30 days automatically becomes an irrevocable consent to adoption unless revoked within that time.



The Legal Process & Relinquishment Through a Public Agency

Your rights and responsibilities

When you decide that adoption is the appropriate plan for your child through a public agency (Human Services Agency), a formal written document called a relinquishment must be signed. You and the adoption social worker sign this document in the presence of two witnesses. The process for children who are eligible for membership or enrolled in a federally recognized Native American tribe and who are under 10 days of age differs as a judge must be one of the witnesses when the relinquishment document is signed. The relinquishment relieves you of all responsibilities toward your child and temporarily grants custody to the agency until the court grants the adoption.

Once the relinquishment is filed with the California Department of Social Services and processed, it becomes a legal and binding document. Before a relinquishment is filed, you may revoke (cancel) it with or without the agency's consent. However, once the relinquishment is final, it can only be voided in any of the following ways:

- By mutual agreement between the agency and the parent who signed the relinquishment
- When the child was not placed in the home of the adoptive parent designated in the relinquishment document
- The child was removed from the home of the adoptive parent designated in the relinquishment document.

It is critical that you are sure of your decision and understand the importance of the relinquishment document before you sign it.

Signing the relinquishment

You must meet with the adoption social worker at least once before you can sign the relinquishment document. If you are the mother of a newborn, you must be discharged from the hospital before you can sign the relinquishment.

You are not required or obligated to sign a relinquishment right away. One of the services offered to you by the Human Services Agency is support to allow you time to make this important lifelong decision without pressure. You may voluntarily place your child in one of our carefully selected Resource Family (foster) homes for a temporary period of time while you consider your options. You and your adoption social worker will mutually decide on the length of time your child will remain in out of home care. We ask that you continue communicating with your adoption social worker during this period of time.